

GOING VERTICAL: THE OPERATIONAL LEAP VIA THE OBJECTIVE FORCE

The Objective Force is a revolutionary development because it will allow us to maneuver in ways no army ever has. The intersection of lethal heavy forces and deployable light forces is the ability to insert modern mounted units across great distances to precise locations that undermine enemy efforts and give us operational and strategic advantage.

When fielded with the proper joint enablers the Objective Force will have the deployability of the 82nd Airborne, the tactical mobility of the 101st, and the lethality and survivability of the 1st Calvary Division. These capabilities, linked together by using advanced information will allow us to break the linear battlefield that has constrained armies since Biblical Times. Our maneuver forces will use speed, violence, and greater situational advantage to provide the nation an instrument of precision maneuver with unparalleled flexibility in any operation. In a joint construct we will leverage the power of information in both the vertical and horizontal dimensions fully integrating maneuver, precision fires and knowledge into decisive results. The results will be a consistent combat overmatch against any adversary. This is critical in a world of increasing uncertainty.

One of the recurring themes in futurist scenarios is the enemy who tries to deny us access to a theater of war. In many of these constructs a variety of political pressure, cruise missiles, use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), targeting of known Ports of Debarkation (PODs), urban defenses, and other tactical and technological means are used to delay, deny or destroy U.S. forces attempting entry to a hostile theater. These anti access threats therefore exist at the strategic, operational and tactical level and demand joint solutions.

The Objective Force, as part of the joint force, will overcome an opponent's asymmetrical threat at all levels. At the strategic level the Objective Force will be deployable from either forward sanctuaries or the U.S. It will have an expeditionary mindset with a campaign quality, be configured for rapid deployment, and be ready at a moments notice. It will be fully joint and capable of managing interagency and multinational operations. At the operational level the Objective Force does not have to land at known PODs, instead can roll off the ramps of Shallow Draft High Speed Sealift or the backs of C [Riggs, John M LTG OF-TF] 130s/C 17s [Riggs, John M LTG OF-TF] and move directly into action. The ability to conduct vertical envelopment thus neutralizes an opponent's concentration of WMD, artillery, rockets, missiles and other combat power at known chokepoints. Tactically, the OF can deploy and redeploy in tactical aircraft capable of landing on short fields and unimproved runways. Unchaining decisive combat power from 6,000 foot runways gives us many options to land forces and exponentially increases the enemy's defensive responsibilities.

The combination of operational maneuver from strategic distances and tactical vertical envelopment with a lethal force maximizes our opportunities to retain the initiative, maintain an offensive posture, reduce enemy options and bring about a rapid collapse. Forces landed anywhere in his rear area can rapidly move to a location of positional advantage. Our Objective Force units can occupy key terrain, dominate a critical resource, cut off reinforcements, or merely threaten all of the above. Combined with other Service capabilities and active deception plans, the vertical envelopment capable Objective Force will sow confusion with its arrival in theater, and prove decisive once employed.

Key to this concept are critical joint enablers such as follow on C-130 tactical lift capable of landing multiple Future Combat System vehicles on a short field or farmer's field. Recent Joint Experiments such as Millennium Challenge 02 demonstrate that lethal combat forces, in this case the Army's Stryker Brigades, can be strategically delivered by rapid sea lift, and tactically delivered by airlift, with the ability to rapidly transition to combat operations.

Vertical envelopment represents the ultimate convergence of deployment and employment, both shortening the time to deliver forces and putting them in a position to gain decisive advantage. Vertical envelopment gives the nation tremendous versatility in all anticipated conflicts and represents a bold step forward in future joint warfighting.